

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 28, line 22, with the following rewritten paragraph:

(Example I)

In an apparatus constructed as illustrated in Fig. 1, a shell-and-tube type reactor was started up by using a niter composed of 50 weight % of potassium nitrate and 50 weight % of sodium nitrite as a heat medium and air as a gas of an elevated temperature to be introduced into the reactor. The niter was stored in the tank 31 and not allowed to remain in the reactor before the reactor was started up.